

racial injustice to breathe the same air that we breathe, or to live among us as a plague upon our Nation, or to poison the sweet light of day with its grim darkness of evil.

We come here today in the name of justice, to fully and finally honor Private Booker Townsell, a soldier, a hero, an African American who served his country in a time of war, only to be deserted by his country in his time of need.

Racial injustice struck down this innocent man, and others, who were denied the opportunity to live their lives with a full measure of honor for their military service and who were denied all their rightful benefits for their military service, including the right of their family to receive an American flag when they passed.

The American flag is a powerful symbol of our Nation's strength, unity and commitment to core values like equal justice under the law and equal rights. Today our flag also represents the courage of an Army private and the dignity of his family to accept justice delayed after being denied so long, and it represents the ability of a great Nation to look inward and admit a grave injustice.

This is a proud day for Private Booker Townsell and his family. He has been promoted from Army private to American role model, and his life, service and this day teaches us a lot about ourselves and our Nation.

Dr. King said: The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy.

Booker Townsell, and his family and others like Sam Snow who lives in Florida, stood up to the challenge and, in so doing, stood up for us all. Today, on their behalf, America renews its vow to fight racial injustice, to acknowledge the deep and tragic mistakes of the past and to restore hope in the future.

Here in Washington the work is not finished. The legislation Senator NELSON and I introduced today will, along with others, including Congresswoman MOORE from Milwaukee, direct the Army to provide the Fort Lawton survivors like Sam Snow in Florida and families like Booker Townsell with the economic benefits to which they're entitled. It's the least we can do. I also hope that we can put a memorial on the Fort Lawton site to teach future generations about the sacrifices made by Booker Townsell, Sam Snow, and others, and to remind us that we must never forget that injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere.

Today, we salute Private Booker Townsell and his loved ones on behalf of this grateful Nation. We are grateful for his military service, his courage, and his dignity, and grateful that America is strong enough to admit its mistakes and provide justice and honor at long last.

I would like to enter into the RECORD an article from the Milwaukee Sentinel

dated 19 January 2008, entitled, "Injustice Undone."

[From the Milwaukee Sentinel, Jan. 19, 2008]

INJUSTICE UNDONE: SOLDIER HONORED MORE THAN 20 YEARS AFTER DEATH
(By Meg Kissingner)

Carol Blalock closed her eyes and smiled as the sound of gunshots rang through the bitter cold morning air on Saturday.

At long last, justice had been served.

Her father, Booker Townsell, who died in 1984, had finally been granted full military honors, a proper military burial at Graceland Cemetery on Milwaukee's northwest side. An Army contingent, including Ronald James, Assistant Secretary of the Army, traveled to Milwaukee to correct an injustice begun more than 63 years ago.

In August 1944, Townsell and 42 other African-American soldiers were blamed for the lynching death of an Italian prisoner of war at Fort Lawton, an Army base outside Seattle. Many of them, including Townsell, were convicted of rioting. Two others were convicted of manslaughter.

The story might have ended there, had it not been for curiosity of a television reporter named Jack Hamann, who, along with his wife, Leslie, spent 20 years uncovering the facts of the case. Their account, in the book "On American Soil: How Justice Became a Casualty of World War II," prompted a bipartisan call for the convictions to be overturned and full military honors to be restored. In October, the Army reversed the conviction of Townsell and the others.

Hamann stood at the front of the chapel at Graceland on Saturday, fighting back tears as the Army color guard played taps.

"Reporters are trained to check out emotionally," he said. "But this one is tough."

Also standing in the crowd was Ronald Hayes, a retired master sergeant and Townsell family friend, who likewise swallowed hard when Wisconsin Army National Guard Brig. Gen. Roger Lalich presented the U.S. flag to Townsell's oldest daughter, Marion Williamson.

"This is good," Hayes said.

Later in the day, nearly 200 people gathered at the Milwaukee County War Memorial Center to pay tribute to Townsell and to celebrate his ultimate exoneration.

"He wouldn't have wanted this attention," Williamson told the crowd. "But he deserves it. I hope my father's soul can finally rest in peace."

Speakers included Jim McDermott, Democratic congressman from the state of Washington who pushed to have the Army reverse the convictions.

"Too often the color of skin defined fate and denied due process," McDermott said.

Quoting the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., McDermott talked of why this decision is so important and the need to celebrate it so urgent.

"Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere," he said. McDermott complimented the Army for admitting a grave mistake. He recalled the images of Townsell as a dedicated family man and factory worker, who danced with his children and cheered his granddaughter at her track meet.

It would have been easy for Townsell to wallow in the bitterness of this dark chapter of his life, McDermott said. Instead, he chose to persevere. Again invoking King's words, McDermott said, "The ultimate measure of a man is not where he stands in moments of comfort and convenience, but where he stands at times of challenge and controversy."

As far as Blalock and the other members of Townsell's family were concerned, Saturday's ceremony was no less precious because of the time it took to make things right.

"I loved my father's laugh," Blalock said. "When they had that 21-gun salute and played taps, it was like I could hear him laugh again."

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The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from North Carolina (Mr. JONES) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. JONES of North Carolina addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

RIC WILLIAMSON

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Texas (Mr. BURGESS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. BURGESS. Madam Speaker, I come to the floor of the House this afternoon to remember one of the most dedicated public servants from the State of Texas we lost on December 30 of this year.

Ric Williamson was a member of the Texas Transportation Commission and served as that body's Chair that oversees statewide activities for the Texas Department of Transportation. He was appointed to that position in March of 2001 by Governor Rick Perry and in January of 2004 became the chairman of the Texas Transportation Commission.

Prior to his appointment, he served in the Texas State Legislature from 1985 to 1988. Numerous professional and legislative accomplishments are attributed to Ric Williamson, and many awards from the Texas media, including twice being recognized as one of the 10 best legislators in the Texas State Legislature in 1989 and 1991.

Ric was born in Abilene, Texas, and graduated with a B.A. degree from the University of Texas in 1974. He later founded his own natural gas production company. He made his home in Weatherford, Texas, with his wife, Mary Ann. He has three beautiful daughters, Melissa, Katherine and Sara, who spoke so eloquently on behalf of their father in the memorial service that we held this past January 3. Ric has two grandchildren. Most recently, his grandson was born at the beginning of December of this past year.

Chairman Williamson brought a sense of purpose, a sense of vision, and a sense of urgency that had not previously been present in the State of Texas when it came to issues regarding transportation. He established a strategic plan, he set real goals, and then he did everything within his power to meet those goals.

He wanted to reduce congestion. He wanted to improve safety. He wanted to expand economic opportunity, increase the value of the assets in the Texas highway system, and clean the air.

One of his greatest legacies was to empower local leaders to make local

transportation decisions. The best example of this empowerment is the State Highway 121 Project in my district of the Dallas/Fort Worth area. This brought over \$3 billion in highway construction funds to north Texas. At a time when the rest of Texas and, indeed, many other areas of the Nation have money only to put towards maintenance, we have money available for new construction because of Ric's vision.

He wasn't always easy to live with, he wasn't always easy to work with, but you always knew where you stood with Ric Williamson; you were never left guessing.

He was more than just a leader for Texas; he helped make Texas a leader for the Nation. The United States Department of Transportation now looks toward Texas as a model for other States to use to employ some of those innovative solutions to their challenging problems. And that was, in whole part, due to Ric's unique vision for the State of Texas.

Shortly after Ric Williamson's death, the Federal Highway Administrator Richard Capka said, "He helped pave the way for some of the Nation's most innovative transportation projects, and he is largely responsible for bringing highway financing for Texas and the rest of the Nation into the 21st century." He got Texans thinking. He got other Americans thinking on a broad and deep level about issues regarding transportation in a way that probably had never been done before.

During the memorial service for Ric Williamson, and many people got up and spoke on his behalf, it was frequently brought out how Ric Williamson regarded politics as a full contact sport. He would go at it with everything he had. And again, you always knew where you stood with Ric Williamson and he wasn't always easy to live with. But Ric Williamson believed that these discussions should take place within the light of day, not behind closed doors, not in some smoke-filled room. So, it's to his credit that he pushed these ideas in the State of Texas, but it was never done in secret; it was never done behind some veil. Everyone always knew where Ric Williamson was and what he was doing.

He will always be remembered by his friends and associates as a true champion for all things Texan. He was unafraid to challenge the status quo. He was highly regarded for bringing innovative ideas to provide safe, economic, and reliable transportation to improve the quality of daily lives of all Texans.

On a strictly personal level, Ric remained a patient mentor to me, a steadfast friend, and I will greatly miss him.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from California (Ms. WOOLSEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. WOOLSEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

SCHIP VETO OVERRIDE

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Arizona (Ms. GIFFORDS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. GIFFORDS. Madam Speaker, I am speaking out today in strong opposition of the President's veto of the KidsCare bill, also known as SCHIP here in Washington. I am profoundly disappointed that we were not able today to override the President's veto.

In the State of Arizona, there are over 264,000 children that currently do not have health insurance. That's about one out of every five kids. Across the country, it's estimated that over 1 million children do not have health insurance.

I am deeply concerned, in addition, because of the slowing of the economy, about the fact that we're going to see unemployment rates increase. And just last week, the Joint Economic Committee came out and stated that "worsening economic conditions will likely create substantial increases in demands in States' Medicaid and Children's Health Insurance Programs."

The JEC specifically linked employment woes to demands for programs like KidsCare. Nationwide, they projected that between 700,000 and 1.1 million children per year will be added to the enrollment numbers for Medicaid and SCHIP due to the slowdown in the economy. That makes acting to ensure a strong SCHIP or KidsCare program in Arizona and across the country absolutely critical, but it also reveals how out of touch the President is and how willing he is not just to disregard our children, but to disregard the future of our Nation.

As the universal health care debate continues, there should be no debate about health care for kids. Kids can't work; kids can't afford to pay health insurance premiums, and that's why I'd like to thank the 259 colleagues on both sides of the aisle for voting today to reauthorize KidsCare.

Democrats and Republicans alike must stay united for the children of our country. We are their representatives; we are their voices, and we must speak out for them. That is precisely why I am speaking here today. It is why I will continue to speak out here in Washington and back home in Arizona and why I am not alone. I am joined by thousands and thousands of voices across southern Arizona in calling for Congress and the President to fully reauthorize KidsCare.

In this economic climate, we must not fail to recognize health care as one of the most costly economic challenges confronting businesses, confronting families, and confronting the children of our country.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gen-

tleman from Maryland (Mr. CUMMINGS) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. CUMMINGS addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

PAYING TRIBUTE TO PRIVATE FIRST CLASS JASON LEMKE AND PRIVATE FIRST CLASS KEITH LLOYD

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from Wisconsin (Ms. MOORE) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Ms. MOORE of Wisconsin. Madam Speaker, as of Monday, January 21, 2008, 3,929 members of the United States military have died since the beginning of the Iraq war in March 2003, according to an Associated Press account. Today, I want to take this opportunity to talk about just two of these soldiers, residents of the Fourth Congressional District of Wisconsin.

After these gentlemen have given so much for their country and their communities, our community, I just must pause, we must pause. We can't just allow business to go on as usual until we pay tribute here on the floor of the House to these young men and to offer my sincerest condolences to their families.

On January 5, Army Private First Class Jason Lemke, age 30, was killed in Iraq as a result of wounds suffered when his vehicle struck a roadside bomb. PFC Lemke was not just a soldier, Madam Speaker, but also a father of three young daughters, Amber, Liz and Casey.

When he was interred just a few weeks ago on January 16, a family lost a loving father, a beloved son, his mom and dad, Colleen and Greg, and brother to Jerrie and Jill Lemke.

A 1996 graduate of Wisconsin Lutheran High School in Milwaukee, Jason wanted to enlist in the Army right after graduation from high school, but his parents talked him out of it. Instead, he worked and raised his baby girls. In December of 2004, PFC Lemke answered the call of his heart and enlisted in the Army in Milwaukee and reported to Fort Benning, Georgia, in January of 2005 for initial entry training.

In May of 2005, he reported to Fort Lewis in Washington where he was assigned to A Company, 2nd Battalion, 23rd Infantry Regiment, 2nd Infantry Division, and his brigade was then deployed to Iraq in April of 2007.

One talent that sticks out in my mind was his exceptional linguistic skill. He possessed this extraordinary skill, and he spoke both Spanish and Arabic, and I'm sure that that was an incredible asset to his fellow soldiers in Iraq. His language training came about because the military saw something special in this young man and selected him for intensive training in Arabic. His proficiency in it speaks well of Private First Class Lemke's own capacity and ability to pick up a difficult language in such a short time. I wish I had